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# unfurl /1

WRITING+ART

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January 2020 – writing+art  
/poetry /painting /books /video

/DavideANGELO

/JamesWALTON

/AnneCASEY

/SusanWALD



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## unfurl /1

- Davide Angelo /poetry
- James Walton /poetry
- Anne Casey /poetry
- Susan Wald /painting

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- News about **Bruce PASCOE**'s *Dark Emu*
- Ashbery Mode
- Gander

- Arts calendar.





# Davide ANGELO

## /poetry

Davide Angelo's poems have appeared in *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Overland*, *WA Poets Inc*, *Visible Ink*, and elsewhere. In 2019 he was awarded Second Prize in the Melbourne Poets Union International Poetry Prize, long-listed for the University of Canberra Vice Chancellor's International Poetry Prize and received a Highly Commended in the Ros Spencer Poetry Prize. He lives in Bendigo, Victoria.

► Read Davide Angelo's poetry

# Davide Angelo

Four poems

## Contents

**Fraternal Twin Studies**

**Nine-spotted Moth**

**Graves for Failed Theories**

**Untitled**

**About Davide Angelo**

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Published in [unfurl /1](#)

## Fraternal Twin Studies

The two boys walking the same route to school as us  
were identical because God was running out of new faces.

My Sicilian immigrant parents' house was a mirror  
of the house they left behind and every second that passed  
was an anniversary of something lost.

I know science isn't interested in me or my twin.

There is no scientific or sociological interest in our interplay.

So, I studied us. First in a photograph, in *utero*, in a frozen  
tilted sea — my pale face beside his sun-darkened face.

But we are the same more or less, our mouths indistinguishable  
from our spines — swallowing mother's blood, feeding our pains.

I recognise now, through his art, in drawings of the mutilated world,  
that high-frequency charcoal waves and their sonorous echoes, smudge  
our naked bodies. Fissures on our arched backs like tiger stripes  
— 'fearful symmetry' of tendon, muscle, and bone.

We made this pact you see, to start our secret language  
so when we talk, we talk between isolations, outside of human hearing.

And when I write, I try (and fail) to write our middle age or of our double  
happiness (because I've forgotten how to speak this way).

I remember the sound of his hands painting a primordial fireball,  
as proof of a monstrous abundance, as an allegory of our pagan past  
(because this narrative makes more sense and I've dreamed it more than once).

How will he paint? How will I write our first babbling sounds  
(all vowels and consonants) or two malformed shadows seeping  
into the earth? Whenever we revealed we were actually twins  
there was the inevitable comparative analysis. I studied eyes peeling  
layers of our faces, stripping our bodies bloody — But you look so different (bleed so different).

Contorted Picasso mouths espoused a prevailing ethnic theory,  
a sequence of human migration, a genetic mutation, hinting  
at the inelegance of our design

— searching for a clue, a trace, to single us out, to pinpoint the one fuck  
that moved us from a single point of origin, and pry open our bodies  
— only to ask one of these two questions that dribbled from their lips:

(Ancient Greek Chorus)

Can you read each other's minds?

When your brother is in pain, do you feel it too?

Perhaps the main cause of incredulity was the shape of our eyes,  
mine like almonds, his more Chinese (because of the skin folds  
of his upper eyelids giving them the slightest slant), but softer,  
more truthful and wiser than mine (because he stared too long

at the sun until it wasn't the benevolent orb above our identical  
stick-figured [starving] bodies in all my drawings).

To shock people, I told them that in the Dark Ages they burned  
mothers and their twins in public because they believed the Devil  
burned a hot fire in the mother's womb.

Judge us by righteous Abel and evil Cain. Three thousand  
twins were sent to the waiting Mengele at Auschwitz.

In the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, the Capitoline Wolf  
turns her head backward and downward at the orphaned suckling twins.  
The list of mythological pairs is incomplete  
— our faces, a mirror of the earth and the moon.

This poem was awarded second prize in the Melbourne Poets Union International Poetry Prize 2019.

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## Nine-spotted Moth

The caterpillars rearrange themselves  
in cocoons of glass, fall fast asleep to rhythms  
of acquiescent trees. Who needs a crucifix  
when you have a panorama of monuments,  
small red domes against Mount Pellegrino.  
Papa twists into an endless sinuous curve,  
says a moth in the house is a sign of good luck.  
I trap nine-spotted moths in a glass jar, in secret,  
one by one. A crucifix on the wall hangs  
like an exclamation. Christ isn't nailed to this one.  
Papa can't explain why the porcelain Jesus' horse-sized  
heart is outside his chest, or why Rosalia, the Saint  
of the mountain, holds her own skull in one hand,  
a pickaxe in the other. I don't have the vocabulary yet  
to explain ideals and old chestnuts like:  
'You should be really proud of yourself  
catching a moth that's already caught'.

\*

In Papa's hometown, I leave religion, so to speak,  
mid-Summer, in the enervating sirocco,  
that part of the day in southwestern Sicily  
when walls lean over you. A dog bounds past,  
disappears under the wheels of the orange bus.

Papa shows me Visconti's *The Leopard*, says,  
'Sometimes things need to change  
so they can stay the same'.

When Winter falls, I mourn for Summer.

I pull a singular thread of sun.

My body purrs with gratitude  
as I feel it snake around me.

When I wash my face, my face  
leaks into the sinkhole.

I'm the one who watches films  
like I'm watching my own memories.

I ascend Mount Pellegrino on my knees  
— a caterpillar over granite stones  
sharp as the shattered glass of jars  
and cocoons.

This poem was Highly Commended in the Ros Spencer Poetry Prize 2019. It was subsequently published in *Brushstrokes: Ros Spencer Poetry Anthology 2016–2019* (WA Poets Inc 2019).

## Graves for Failed Theories

Emergency is white as a polar day on the equinox.

Tomorrows don't exist. Faces, muted — sfumato, never unbroken, precise in their imprecision, like storms on Jupiter. Waiting, four hours long by four hours wide, is tailor made for unfolding lives like leaflets — catch the sound of tabloid pages crumpling — wings of caterpillars cracking open their chrysalides. Velcro timely ripped, tuning out of the world, tuning in to interiors — (Living) in parentheses.

It's so easy to rest your eyes on the nervousness of others, their restless legs jiggling, so easy to swallow your pride, open a monologue with the big unknown upstairs, as insurance — a "just in case". Lost in a thread, deep in the web of webs, there's a name for my condition.

The app recommends I write a reverse bucket list. Before he died, Stephen Hawking theorised the universe is a hologram.

Siri, I'm anxious. Are you awake? Is there an eloquent way to die out loud?  
"It sounds like talking with someone might help."

Siri, go fuck yourself.

"I don't know how to respond to that."

I theorise a body, like a mountain  
has no lines or borders, the first  
meaningful sound we make is our own  
crying and it's only the midwife  
that recognises imperceptible flourishing.  
In a lab, paper is crumpled into a ball,  
then uncrumpled, seventy times, but the paper  
never stops forming new creases.  
Hours ago I took a long slow drag,  
it stuck to the roof of my mouth.  
I'm still waiting for the hit.

It's these tablets, you see. A smoke ring takes the shape  
of a lung wide enough to hold a storm.

At the triage window, a mother holds her child close to the glass,  
"Spiritually, she's off. She's not normally this irritable."

When it's my turn, there'll be a reckoning with the vowel  
at the end of my name. In 21 days I'll be a non-smoker.  
"Warning, there are side effects", meaning: Don't fuck this up.  
The varenicline is the blood-red apple, tricking my receptors  
to sleeping death. Admire me. Last night I dreamed a doctor  
offered my cigarette (my dopamine) to a raven. It's a side-effect.  
Inside, the sun is burning midnight. Outside, it's bucket dark.

**Note:** The title of this poem is taken from a quote by Omer Gottesman, a physicist, and reprinted in 'This Is the Way the Paper Crumples' by Siobhan Roberts, *The New York Times*, Nov. 26, 2018. Parts of lines 28–30 are taken from the same article.

This poem was shortlisted in the University of Canberra Vice-Chancellor's International Poetry Prize 2019 and subsequently published in *Silence* (International Poetry Studies Institute 2019).

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## Untitled

We ran as fast and far as we could without stopping for rest or water. We saw so many things and what we didn't see we imagined we saw when we re-remembered. We felt young enough for seeing for the first time. We felt old enough for loving and living like lovers. In Spain I grew a beard and in London you cut your hair. We watched three sunsets in Venice and not once did I think about Thomas Mann's Death in Venice until we got to Florence. In Greece we made love on a cliff with the sea as a witness. In Vienna, you asked for a normal life and I dreamed of the Ferris wheel. In Berlin I was a self-indulgent child. I refused to speak to you and went to a bookshop. I found a book about a man who lived on one of the Saronic Islands in Greece. The photographs in the book were taken from a personal collection and I found one photograph of the man as a poet. He is standing with the natural harbour behind him. Below the photograph I read that his eyes see the millions before him. It is 1961. I imagined a story about this man standing there in the harbour in 1961. He is listening to the talk of lovers while clinging to the last lines of a poem he was writing. He is thinking of his wife but he is ruined and searching for a means of keeping her face from fading. He keeps her photograph in his wallet. He wants to make love with her while the last lines of his poem reveal themselves. He does not feel free and tries to conjure a rhyme about being jailed by the horizon and having to endure beautiful young bodies being bruised delicately through stories as old as the natural harbour. He clings to his fading youth; he clings to the fading proof of her. He loves in a sepia world, among the loose tongues kissing and creating better histories.

This poem appeared in *Overland Literary Journal*, 202 Autumn 2011.

## About Davide Angelo

Davide Angelo's poems have appeared in *Cordite Poetry Review*, *Overland*, *WA Poets Inc*, *Visible Ink*, and elsewhere. In 2019 he was awarded Second Prize in the *Melbourne Poets Union International Poetry Prize*, long-listed for the *University of Canberra Vice Chancellor's International Poetry Prize* and received a Highly Commended in the *Ros Spencer Poetry Prize*. He lives in Bendigo, Victoria.

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# James WALTON

## /poetry

James Walton was a librarian, a farm laborer, and mostly a public sector union official. He is published in many anthologies, journals, and newspapers. He has been shortlisted for the ACU National Literature Prize, the MPU International Prize, The William Wantling Prize, the James Tate Prize, and is a winner of the Raw Art Review Chapbook Competition. His poetry collections include *The Leviathan's Apprentice* (Publish and Print, UK 2015), *Walking Through Fences* (ASM & Cerberus Press, 2018) *Unstill Mosaics* (Busybird,

2019), and *Abandoned Soliloquies* (Uncollected Press, 2019).

► Read James Walton's poetry

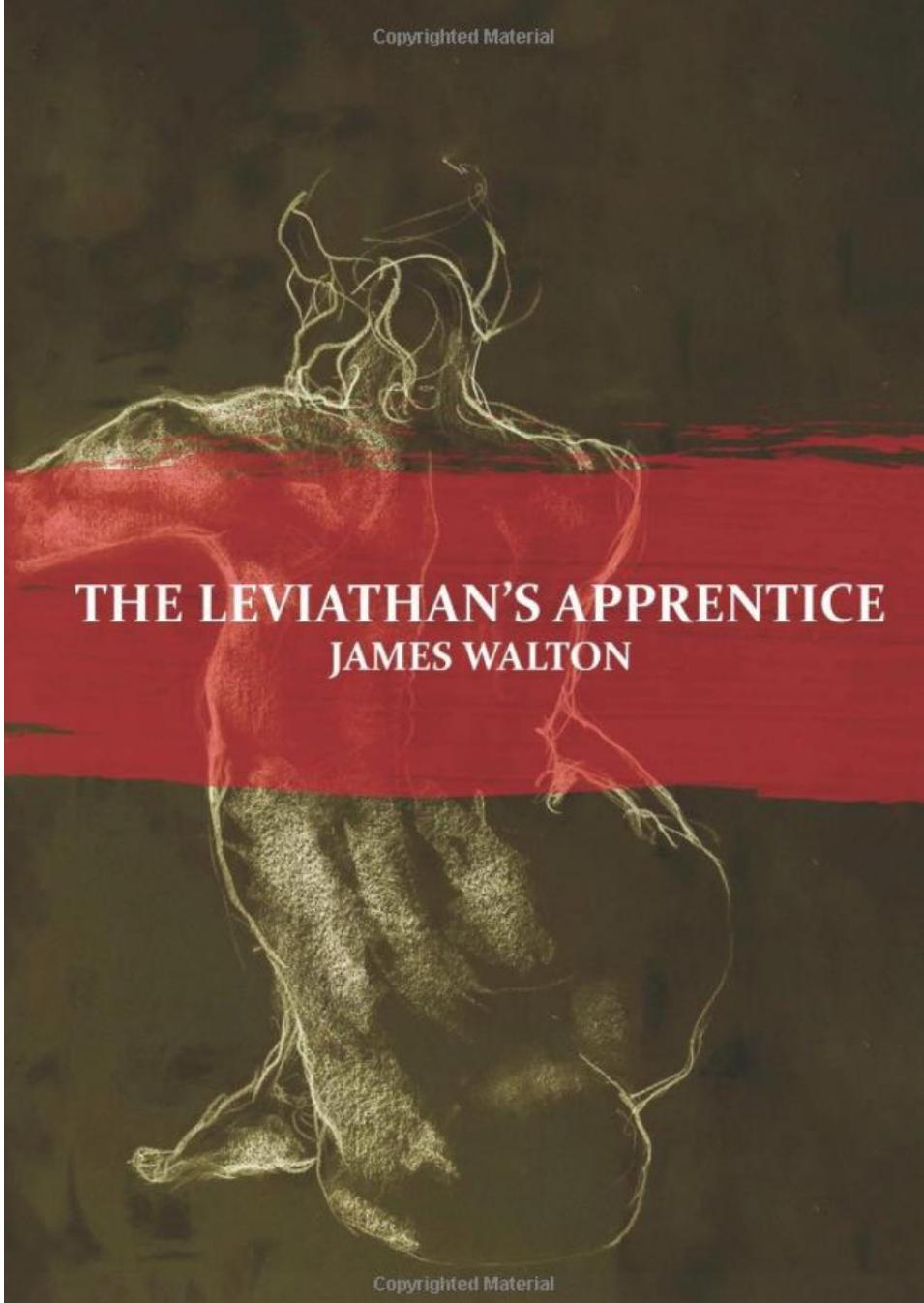
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Contact James Walton

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JAMES WALTON

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# Unstill Mosaics

The Book of  
Love,  
Loss,  
and  
Longing

James Walton

# James Walton

Four poems

## Contents

**Two handed draw**

**Sea of Souls**

**A Diary of Anne Boleyn**

**Fuck You Truck**

**About James Walton**

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Published in [unfurl/1](#)



## Two handed draw

I had thought  
like a bird falling from a nest,  
undressed as a heart  
beating within my palm,  
to have outlived usefulness

instead with both arms lifting  
because I had no choice,  
that frantic beak signing  
in all the shredded shorthand,  
ever lost to this binary world

placed the wingless thing  
into the silky oak's airy cradle,  
then sat cross legged and whistled  
a feathery version of In My life,  
waiting for new down to form

Published in *somnia.blue* 2018, *Unstill Mosaics*, Busybird Publishing, 2019.

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## Sea of Souls

There's a cove. A house straggles  
a sagging beach, where behind a patched blind  
the Hendrix version of All Along the Watchtower  
sends its summons through the wave speakers.

God opens the door, a stubby in one hand  
and his left eye bleeding from a blood vessel.  
You're late he pines at me, I'm too polite to say  
what I think, that's it too early to be drinking,  
but how do you chastise an omnipotence.  
I was the only anarchist, let it all run free  
and now it's turned to shit, he's telling a dirty sheet  
of an angel that's being used as a coat stand.

On a love seat. Straight out from underneath  
a window, Miro sculptures are smoking cigaroes  
and whistling Beethoven's Seventh Symphony  
the movement that makes the walls cry.

Do you by any chance play Bass  
Jimi's last assistant went up in smoke in Cross Town Traffic.  
It crosses my mind that he should know the answer,  
he's lost interest, retouching a forged Picasso.  
Gave the little wanker everything and what did I get  
suddenly angry, he grabs my throat beer breath in  
my face, and you cut your wrists for freedom fell  
into the street and a car finished you off.

The other side of the ramshackle. Sky and ocean are joined  
by Siamese lightning, sacred ibis in ancient shawls gather neon  
cockchafers placing them in mother of pearl wickers  
rippling at the iron magnetism of each shock.

The wattage sighs as each basket comes and goes  
a drop from his cornea sets the brimming protein.  
I sent a boy on a man's job once, Jesus what a debacle -  
here, you'll appreciate the irony in this  
see if you can pick who's coming or going journeyman,  
for the first of the first time in all these millennia  
I'm going to have a lie down, this whistling sphincter's all yours  
welcome to heaven and take care where you step.

Published in Verity La 2016, *Abandoned Soliloquies*, UnCollected Press 2019

## A Diary of Anne Boleyn

My ladies weep in the vernacular tongue  
kneeling in the French style

I caught the wren as another's head fell  
and later perched for witness

at the place near the abbey a heart beat quiet  
then loud the cat still as sculpture

artful ferocity in those bloody sinew lines  
drew from these palms a sanctuary

a censer swings slowly for a thousand days  
the metal clangs its catechism

open hands meet the knowledge of ravens  
given voice from a wooden block

release an olive complexion by Wyatt written  
in pulse of reformist contraband

arms drop at side outstretched fingers release  
not falconry or master's quiver

took flight a stalked harmless precious thing  
away from the predator and papal manoeuvring

a scavenge of royal alchemists pecks to parts  
the once kindest knit of souls

the loins of a king are as common as any man  
tempest wings erupt impatient there

Published in *Nerdalicious*, 2017, *Unstill Mosaics*, Busybird Publishing 2019.

## Fuck You Truck

remember the first time that retch  
of a trodden heart when youth  
fancies itself worth an ending

this hill so steep I'm standing  
fingers dug into the green of it  
waiting for the valley to drop

the bike on its head by the soak  
how the angle tripped technology  
four wheels sliding in dismay

telling death him her it them  
what a poor job you're making of it  
fuck you fuck you fuck you

a baby on a road spared the decline of parents  
civilians or what's left rising like bakers' apprentices  
from the rubble of a laugh at family suppers

in the rumble of machines or a vest opening  
fates that crossed on some lunatic's list  
gods make devils of the most prolific things

rolling over my too comfortable tummy  
feet push into the slope a slow gain  
red clay and a marguerite of cape weed

if gravity is just another name for presence  
falling through a reserved space  
makes a vacant soul blossom into being

those ambulances what keeps them going  
water still arrives bearers are carried  
hands dig throw burrow crave and care

a fob watch woman eats men like air  
a man talks of wearing his trousers rolled  
a human is already a fragile worn glorious thing

a child's waking tingling morning stretch  
should be the icing on the day  
having already dreamed what cannot be taken

Published in *Walking Through Fences*, ASM & Cerberus Press – Flying Island Books 2018.

## About James Walton

James Walton was a librarian, a farm laborer, and mostly a public sector union official. He is published in many anthologies, journals, and newspapers. He has been shortlisted for the ACU National Literature Prize, the MPU International Prize, The William Wantling Prize, the James Tate Prize, and is a winner of the Raw Art Review Chapbook Competition. His poetry collections include *The Leviathan's Apprentice* (Publish and Print UK 2015), *Walking Through Fences* (ASM & Cerberus Press, 2018) *Unstill Mosaics* (Busybird, 2019), and *Abandoned Soliloquies* (Uncollected Press, 2019).

→ [Leviathan's Apprentice on Amazon](#)

→ [Unstill Mosaics on Amazon](#)

→ [The Raw Art Review](#)

or from the author → [jimw1040@gmail.com](mailto:jimw1040@gmail.com)

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# Anne CASEY /poetry

Originally from the west of Ireland and living in Sydney, Anne Casey is author of two poetry collections –*where the lost things go* (Salmon Poetry 2017, 2nd ed 2018) and *out of emptied cups* (Salmon Poetry, 2019).

Anne has worked for 30 years as a journalist, magazine editor, media communications director and legal author. Her writing and poetry rank in leading national daily newspaper, The Irish Times' 'Most-Read' and are widely published internationally – *The Irish Times*, *Entropy*, *apt*, *Murmur House*, *Quiddity*, *Barzakh* (State University of New York), *DASH* (California State University), *FourXFour* (Poetry Northern Ireland), *Cordite*, *The Canberra Times*, *Verity La* and *Plumwood*

*Mountain* among others. Anne's poetry has won/shortlisted for awards in Ireland, Northern Ireland, the USA, the UK, Canada, Hong Kong and Australia. She is Senior Poetry Editor of *Other Terrain Journal* and *Backstory Journal* (Swinburne University, Melbourne) and sits on numerous literary advisory boards.

► Read Anne Casey's poetry

## Listen to Anne CASEY...

- All Souls
- if i were to tell you



# Anne Casey

Four poems

## Contents

**All Souls**

**if i were to tell you**

**At sea**

**Recipe for a Giant Pickle**

**About Anne Casey**

Published in [unfurl /1](#)

## All Souls

*for the victims of the Irish Mother and Baby Homes*

A citrus swirl of myrtle crosses my path  
as three skulking brush turkeys scatter dramatically  
into the understory  
Crushed sandstone scrapes under flagging sandals  
blending with  
the tick-tick distant and more insistent chitter and chirrup  
perpetual Trisagion against  
the far-off clamour of trucks and cars morphing  
this second day of November into  
the roll and thunder of mist-capped surf on distant shores

And there's the sharp salt catch at the back of the palate  
My mother standing  
arms thrown out against the Atlantic's roar  
embracing the world with a desperate love  
like Jesus  
after the delivery of her death sentence  
and before her crucifixion  
Too far away too long ago  
but still the piercing and the gush of water  
The salt rub of old wounds crossing time and space

The quick chirp  
of a message from my father  
eleven hours behind but instantaneously dispatching  
me to the fiery pits of hell where  
starched sisters must surely be burning  
Pharaohs in their hooded head-coverings shepherding  
the little children and their unmarried mothers  
through famishment into lightless catacombs  
saving an anointed few borne nameless  
in Moses baskets unto the Promised Land

A kookaburra laughing  
carries me home through the clearing  
where the wattles are bursting  
their golden crowns dancing  
against a brooding backdrop and  
rainbow lorikeets will swoop  
in later lifting our hearts  
out of emptied cups and  
away with them into  
the heavens

This poem was Highly Commended in the Fellowship of Australian Writers Queensland Literary Competition 2018, a finalist in the Summer Literary Series 2018 Fiction & Poetry Contest (Canada) and longlisted for the Bedford International Writing Competition 2018 (UK). It was first published in Scope magazine (Fellowship of Australian Writers Queensland), February/March 2019 issue and subsequently in Anne Casey's poetry collection, 'out of emptied cups' (Salmon Poetry 2019).

## if i were to tell you

when sunbeams stream over yellow underbelly  
a honeyeater feasting between gilding leaves  
i wish i could fly up there to sit for a while away  
from the pace and chaos of ordinary things

that is where

when i spy the upturned cup of a ghost-moon plump  
in a deep blue pillowed afternoon i think i must call my Mum  
though i clasped her hand while she passed such a long time since  
as the tide rasped its shallow symphony over our last goodbye

that is where

when i stretch to parting-kiss the soft pink cheek  
of my son now twelve towering  
over me i feel again the wrench as they pulled  
him from my ruptured belly

that is where

when breath of sea sends me sailing back to  
this rough hand gentle over mine my weathered  
trawler-captain father steering me away from jagged territory  
into calmer waters (still) sometimes against my will

that is where

when i smell your neck to  
fall again over the handrail of our  
romantic balcony landing in the toy-scattered  
couch of our reality

that is where

when i tumble on a crumpled butterfly ensnared  
once more by that man-boy-man who tore my wings  
(never mind i put them back together in time)  
on dark days you can still see the scars but on bright ones

that is where

i would tell you  
that is where  
the light shines through  
the strongest

This poem won first prize in the *2018 Alice Sinclair Memorial Writing Competition* (Fellowship of Australian Writers—Lake Macquarie/NSW). It was published first in *Quiddity* literary journal in December 2018, and subsequently in *out of emptied cups poetry* collection by Anne Casey (Salmon Poetry, 2019).

## At sea

Brine rises, whetted as memories in my sandbagged lungs—  
plastic-scrap semi-sunk in a spring tide, ragged and limp, as hard to inflate

I came from the sea, a distant shore pummelled even then—  
beaches these days reshaped by each season, squalls outside living recollection

Seawater pillow'd my children before they were born—  
blood-warm as the currents swarming to nurture the Crown of Thorns, they thrived into life

Wave-surges swell on the storm-ravaged islands of my consciousness—  
Welling like water-winged infants, as vulnerable to submersion; I still worry they'll drown

My body grows nodules virulent as invaders engulfing virile organs—  
once plump and vigorous as coral polyps, my cells too, pulse with petrochemicals

My temperature rises with each falling number—  
Two thousand species, two thousand metres deep, two thousand kilometres wide

My heart sinks—  
Faster than the five hundred billion plastic bags we use each year

My vision clouds—  
Murky as forty per cent of the world's ocean surface obscured in manmade debris

But, small and bright as spawn-clouds blooming—  
White, gold, coral, the young surfacing, shine through seeking truth

Our budding hope

This poem was first published in *Plumwood Mountain: Intersecting Energies* in August 2019.

## Recipe for a Giant Pickle

Take one shovel  
A big, big BIG shovel

Dig one hole  
A big, big BLACK hole

Extract all carbon in the form of coal (approximately 2.3 billion tonnes)  
Reserve for later

*Into the big, big BIG BLACK hole, pour:*  
All rights of the Wangan, Jagalingou and Juru indigenous people

*Slowly adding:*  
120 billion litres of groundwater (if available)  
Futures of Carmichael, Thompson, Barcoo, Diamantina, Flinders, Bulloo  
and Warrego rivers

*Stir well before adding:*  
Lake Buchanan, Lake Galilee, Betts Creek, and as many small aquifers  
of the Galilee and Great Artesian basins  
as you can get your hands on  
(quantities subject to seasonal variation)

*Slowly slide sand and soil of:*  
75,000 square kilometres of the Desert Uplands  
into the big, big BIG BLACK hole

*Using a sharp-bladed mixer, carefully blend in:*  
Large quantities and varieties of unique fauna,  
particularly Black Throated Finch  
Add Wallum Frogs and Sugar Gliders for colour and sweetness

*Now add:*  
Over 14,000 species of irreplaceable indigenous flora,  
particularly rare boronia  
(the rarer, the better)

*Tip the remaining ingredients in and cover up:*  
23 laws relating to financial rectitude  
Several large handfuls of environmental protection statutes  
One billion dollars of Australian taxpayers' money  
Sixty-nine thousand reef tourism jobs  
(10,000 jobs should rise out of the mixture to balance acidity)

*You can now discard:*  
The strongly held opinions of 12 million Australians, as well as  
Australia's international reputation

*While you are waiting,  
take the 2.3 billion tonnes of carbon reserved earlier, and:*  
Slowly simmer one small blue planet

This poem was first published in *hope for whole: poets speak up to Adani* anthology (Plumwood Mountain, 2018). It was selected for performance by the Climate Guardians at the *Biennale of Australian Art 2018*, the largest ever showcase of living Australian artists, in October 2018 and to be read by Anne Casey at the *Remembrance for Lost Species 2019* event at Articulate Space in Sydney. This poem was also published in Anne Casey's poetry collection, *out of emptied cups* (Salmon Poetry, 2019) and printed as a limited-edition poster by Garden Lounge creative space in Newtown, Sydney.

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## About Anne Casey

Originally from the west of Ireland and living in Sydney, Anne Casey is author of two poetry collections—*where the lost things go* (Salmon Poetry 2017, 2nd ed 2018) and *out of emptied cups* (Salmon Poetry, 2019). Anne has worked for 30 years as a journalist, magazine editor, media communications director and legal author. Her writing and poetry rank in leading national daily newspaper, *The Irish Times* 'Most-Read' and are widely published internationally—*The Irish Times*, *Entropy*, *apt*, Murmur House, *Quiddity*, *Barzakh* (State University of New York), *DASH* (California State University), *FourXFour* (Poetry Northern Ireland), *Cordite*, *The Canberra Times*, *Verity La* and *Plumwood Mountain* among others. Anne's poetry has won/shortlisted for awards in Ireland, Northern Ireland, the USA, the UK, Canada, Hong Kong and Australia. She is Senior Poetry Editor of *Other Terrain Journal* and *Backstory Journal* (Swinburne University, Melbourne) and sits on numerous literary advisory boards.

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# Susan WALD /artist

► [susanwald.org](http://susanwald.org)



<https://youtu.be/gL1mfAEY0GA>

« My language is paint. I speak through the medium of paint and ink, pencil and pastel. This is a language I am always learning, a language of challenge and a language of love, where I try to express my thoughts and responses to the world around me, bear witness to the actions of mankind and the wonder and beauty of the land.

This land speaks to me, speaks of its ancient presence, of the justice and injustice it has witnessed, the rich oasis that was ours to nurture. We ravaged it, murdered and displaced its indigenous peoples, poisoned it with chemicals, tore down the trees and made extinct so many of its animals, plants and insects. The land gave to us so that we would take what we need, not more. Now we face our own extinction.

Painting is a passion and a refuge. My hope is that I have something to say and something to give, that I

can be heard and can communicate through the language of my paint. »

—Susan Wald, January 2020

► Print Council of Australia interview with Susan Wald

► [susanwald.org](http://susanwald.org)

## **The paintings and monotypes of Susan Wald's exhibition at the Mildura Arts Centre (March 2020)**





Installation view of the 'MUNGO' exhibition.



Monoprints from the 'MUNGO' exhibition.





# Bruce PASCOE

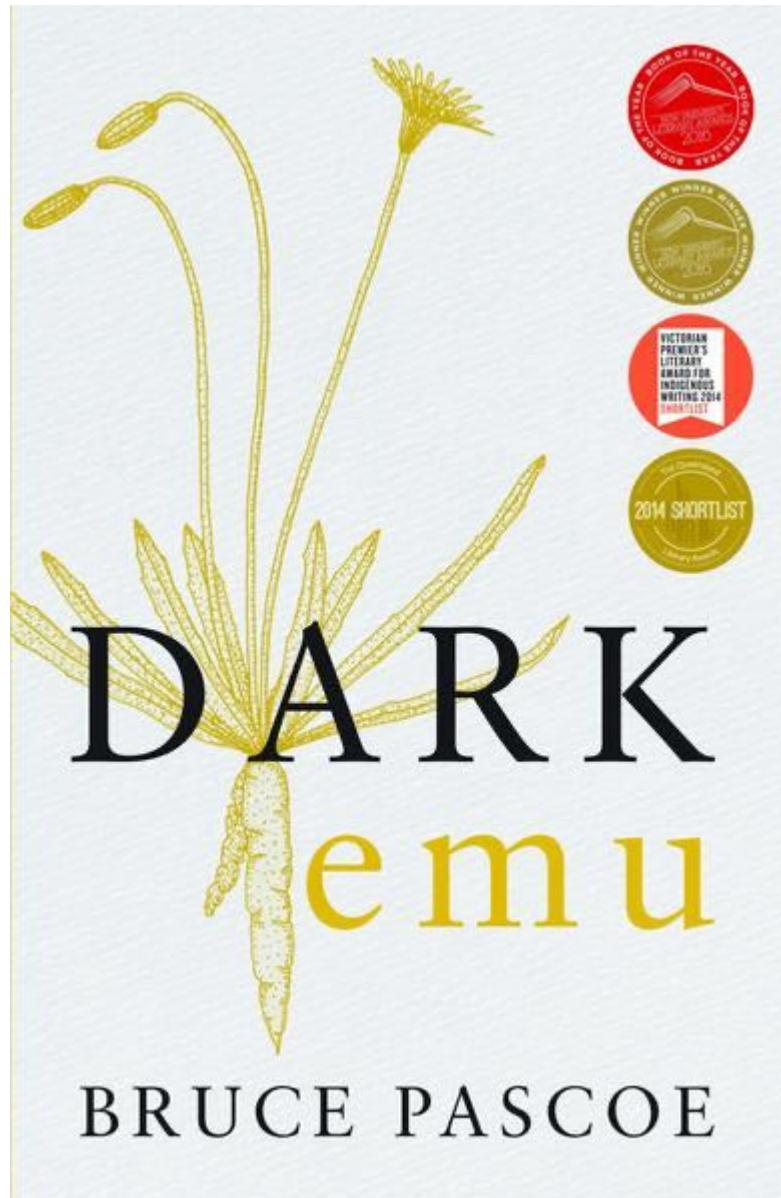
**From the TripleR website...**

Journalist Rick Morton on Dark Emu and Andrew Bolt...

*Andrew Bolt's column in The Herald Sun recently sought to undermine author Bruce Pascoe and the factual integrity of his book Dark Emu. Bolt's supposed 'fact-check' of Pascoe's*

*work left many, including senior reporter for The Saturday Paper Rick Morton, scratching their heads. Who fact-checks the fact-checkers? On The Mission, Rick discusses how two days of research led to Bolt's 'egregiously wrong set of columns' and history of attacks against Bruce Pascoe being exposed. 'It didn't take long,' Rick says. '[Bolt] isn't interested in the details because he got many of them wrong himself.' By Rick's assessment, Bolt seems 'very keen' to preserve prevailing views on Australia's Indigenous history and avoid those that might vilify colonialisation. 'History evolves with our understanding of it... but it should not happen at the hands of someone who doesn't understand what they're talking about.'*

- [The full RRR interview, 24 minutes](#)
- [Bruce Pascoe's book is available on Amazon](#)







Charles Livingstone  
@CLjeSuppose

Just thought you'd like to know, i saw  
an exhausted Bruce Pascoe at  
Mallacoota yesterday, walking past in  
his CFA gear, having a break from  
firefighting. Haven't seen Andrew  
Bolt ...

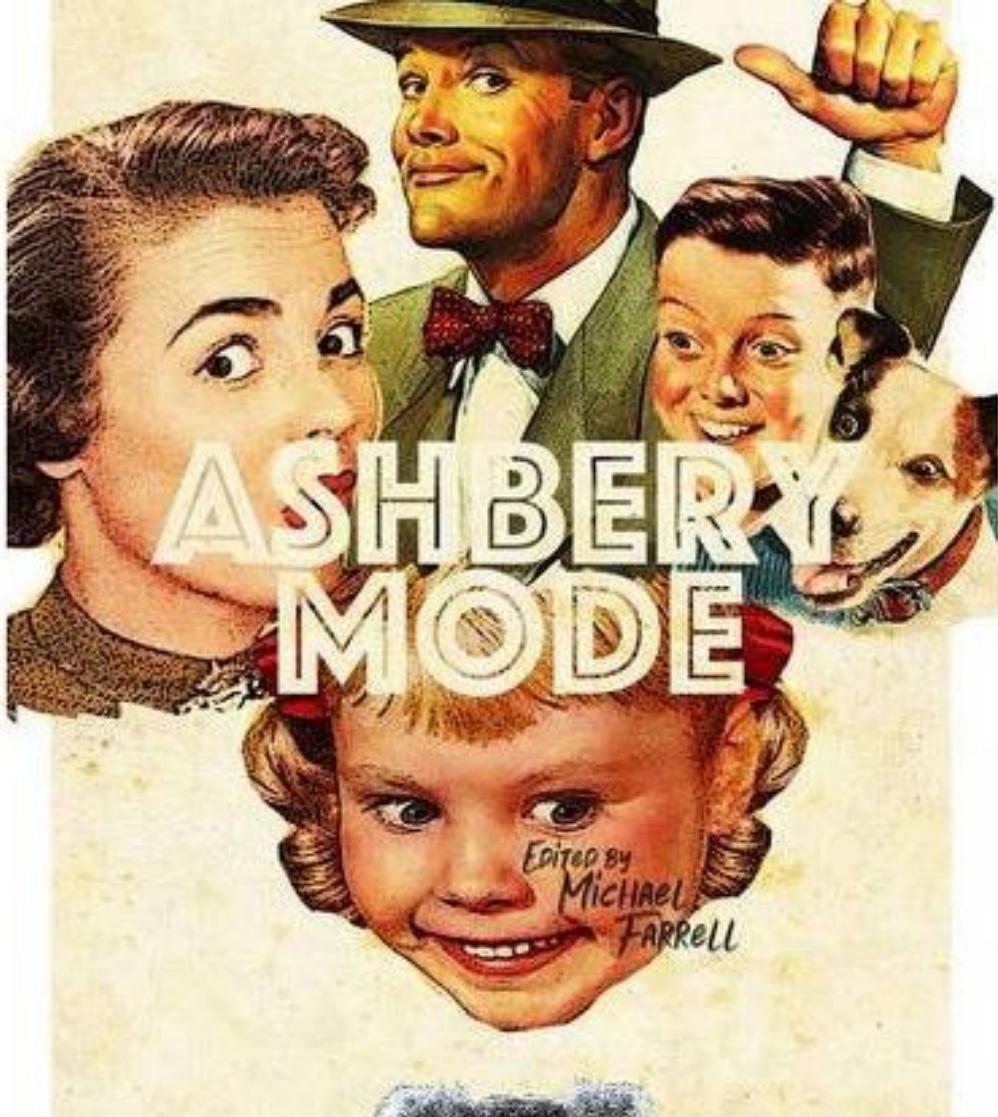
7:42 am · 4/1/20 from Victoria, Australia · Twitter  
for Android



Historian and CFA volunteer Bruce Pascoe has spent  
the past two days clearing fallen trees from local  
roads.

*Photo: Justin McManus*





► Ashbery Mode is available from Tinfish Press

## Featuring

Nicholas Powell | David Prater | Laurie Duggan | Louis Armand | Helen Hagemann | John Kinsella | Jeremy Balius | Craig Hallsworth | Jill Jones | Ken Bolton | Patrick Jones | Peter O'Mara | Kent MacCarter | Adam Ford | Jordie Albiston | Ali Alizadeh | Luke Beesley | Javant Biarujia | Ashley Capes | Wendy Fleming | Tim Grey | Matt Hall | Jennifer Harrison | Susan Hawthorne | Fiona Hile | D.J. Huppertz | Jeltje | Bella Li | Andrew Mahony | Peter Murphy | Jacek Pakul | Robyn E Peck | Peter Rose | Gig Ryan | Philip Salom | Chris Wallace-

Crabbe | Stephen J. Williams | John Jenkins | Louise Crisp | Pam Brown | Joanne Burns | Michelle Cahill | Julie Chevalier | Chris Edwards | Toby Fitch | Tom Lee | Ruark Lewis | Mark Mahemoff | Kate Lilley | David Musgrave | Aden Rolfe | Hazel Smith | James Stuart | John Tranter | Les Wicks | Denis Gallagher | Peter Minter | Juno Gemes | Kit Kelen | Matt Hetherington | Stuart Cooke | B.R. Dionysius | Liam Ferney | Angela Gardner | A.J. Carruthers | Corey Wakeling | Tara Mokhtari | Oscar Schwartz

**24 Books**

**ASHBERY MODE**  
Edited by Michael Farrell  
Tinfish Press, 130pp, \$US20

Gregory Day

**Free to be a long way from home**

The English poet Mark Ford has been a champion of the poetry of John Ashbery for many years. He is the editor of Ashbery's *Collected Poems* and has curated various archives and exhibitions of what many believe to be the most significant poetic voice to emerge from the US since World War II.

Due in part to techniques derived from collage, montage and pastiche, Ashbery's ways a poet's poet, which in part explains Ford comparing the bold of Ashbery's poetry over those "writing in his wake" to that of Milton's in the decades after the publication of *Paradise Lost*.

And yet, looking at photos of Ashbery you'd never suppose such a towering presence. Even as he approached his death in 2017 at the age of 90, he looked always the side-pated boy, friendless and alone.

He had somehow traditional east coast looks, a face that could quite easily have been cast as Reverend John Ames in Marilynne Robinson's novel, *Gilead*. Whereas Milton, despite his liberal and fleshy lips, looks full of the clash and opprobrium of his times, if not downright stern.

Ashbery of course is a helluva lot more than genial and his words are pure poetry, a kind of language of category and canonization. So I won't be fighting that battle here. He did say after all that "to create a work of art that the critic cannot even talk about ought to be the artist's chief concern".

So in discussing Ashbery Mode, a new anthology in which Australian poets have been commissioned to write for, about, or in the mode of Ashbery, it is worth noting that there has been an absence of Australian anthologies published in book form whose theme is that of a single poet. Plenty of academic essays, symposia, conferences, yes, but not book of poems that I know of. Until now.

It is perhaps testament to the fact that Ashbery's "mode" was oblique, not so much open as ajar, that the zone this book inhabits is decidedly springy and generative. Accordingly, the terrific thing about the project, conceived and edited by Australian poet

Michael Farrell, is that it has unleashed so many brilliant lines. For Ashbery language was both friend and foible, fiddler and gem, it was an implement to wield, a fabric to tear, a concrete object, a trope, but essentially a material to manipulate into infrastructure and architecture.

When reading him, as Iavant Bianjiu implies in his wonderful poem, *Exercise in French*, "the most just" - if not the Kleenex - was just out of reach...

Another pertinent line from Ashbery Mode is Ali Alizadeh's "the poem/ must become an instrument for breaking the world's systems of knowledge and facts".

For Ashbery "world" is like a micro-manifesto of Ashbery but is nevertheless well included. As is Farrell's introduction, in which he assembles a helpful local context with which to enter this rather laterally antipodean book.

Farrell informs us for instance that Érn Malley, the Australian hoax poet created by James McCauley and Harold Stewart in 1944, was loved by Ashbery, to the extent that he continued to read Malley's poems in writing classes 30 years after first reading him.

Farrell suggests also that another Australian poet, John Tranter, has had a significant influence on Ashbery. Tranter, after all, is not only in Australia but in the extraterritorial zone of the internet, largely through the online magazine, *Jacket*. It is a mark of his rare aesthetic status that Ashbery comes both from on high and from a place rather more effortless. He ad-

mits to something remarkably akin to Fiona Hile's line in her poem, *Consumption*, that "the ticklish cruelty of novelty leaves/ me all un-new".

Such are the creative binds, even of this kind of play. Intrinsic to the Ashbery Mode though, either in upper or lower case, is the wit of selection. The way disorientation inhabitates with clear imagery.

We look not for the most just but the capricious tendency, the enigmatic seems, and the joke. And we find it in the most refreshingly additive ways. A new book to be heard on radio as one could imagine, in this way, Ashbery's mode often comes as a great relief, or, as the man himself said in his last book.

"It's good to be modern if you can stand it. It's like being left out in the rain, and coming! To understand you were always this way," *Modern*.

Bella's in her rather uncanny simulation of Ashbery in the poem *Just Then* shows one approach to the commission. Chris Edwards's reconstitution of lines from *Flow Chart* is another. While Mark Mahemoff's *Dear Superman* is perhaps riskily sincere, but intimate and touching nevertheless.

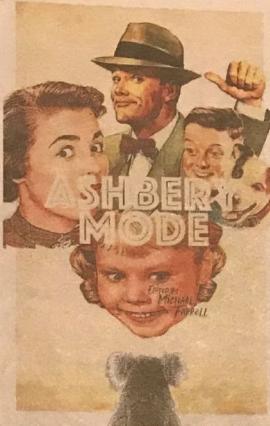
Gregory Day cites Ashbery's own definition of Rimbaud's work: "absolute art is that which has the acknowledgement of the simultaneity of all life, the condition that nourishes poetry at every second. The self is obsolete", and this gets to the heart of the matter.

In the homeland of narcissism Ashbery scooped out the self and put it to one side. It's amazing what turned up in its absence. Passing spaces. The most ordinary exotic. The jolt of what's needed.

Which leaves us thinking then about America v Australia, not in a winnable or contested kind of way but in the sense that Ashbery is in the margin. As among them. Or so it seems. The Ashbery mode is a kind of being in the margin, which was always modeling the margins. The insight to be found in the phenomenologies of exclusion, the gifts we're given and that we can't quite understand let alone keep. This is freedom, I suppose, and lightness, but nothing so glaring as Walt Whitman would recommend, so it's a kind of freedom that's not quite freedom at all.

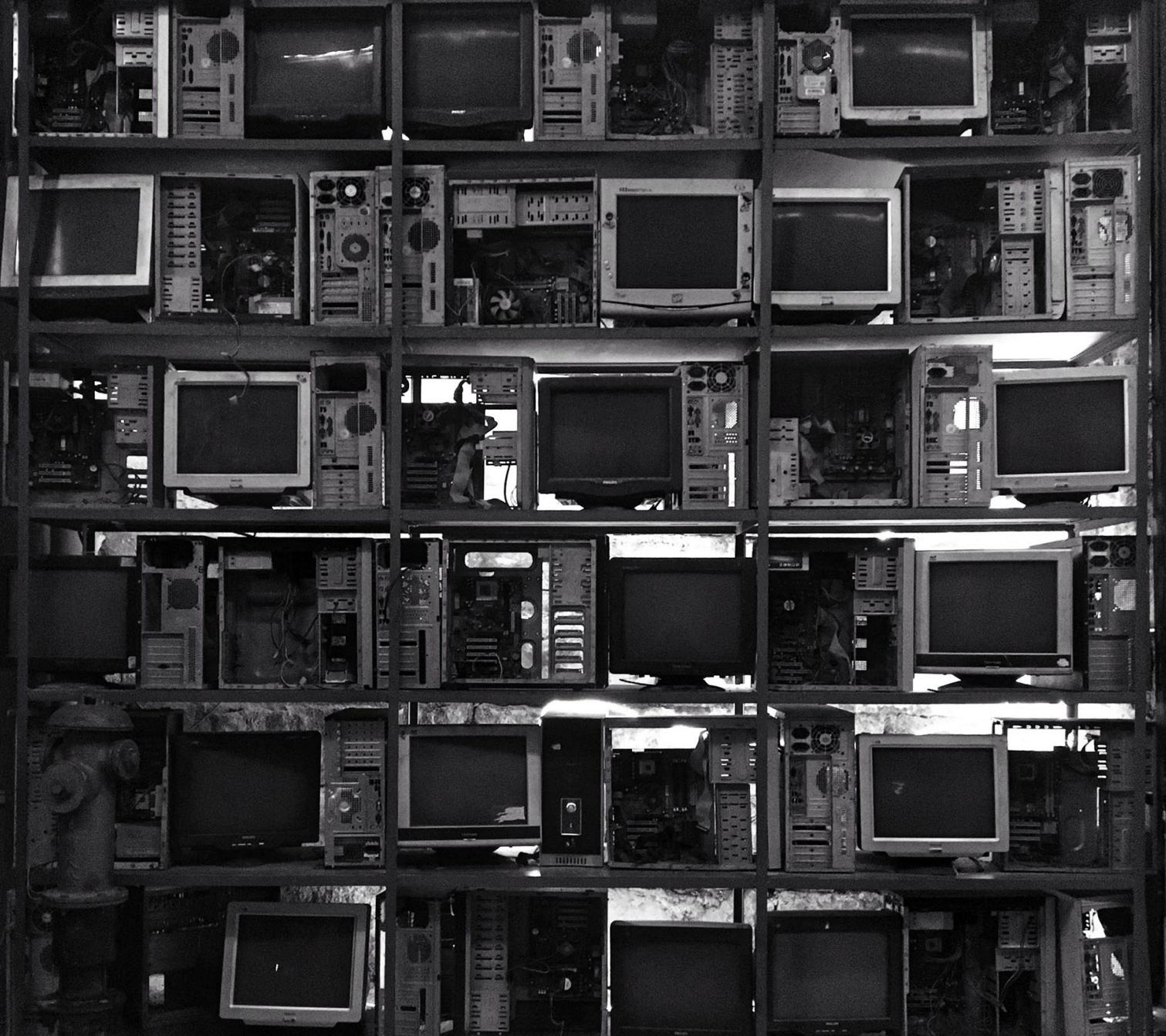
The question then might become, where the hell was Ashbery writing from, if not from himself or from America? I'd say he was writing from a Rousselian land bearing more resemblance to here than there. Wherever that is, I suppose though that what was most American about him was having the confidence not to name it. Well, as they say, you can take the boy out of art but you can't take art out of the boy. Or even out of Australia.

Gregory Day is a writer and poet.



Ashbery Mode, in which Australian poets write for, along or in the mode of John Ashbery

Review



# Gander



<https://youtu.be/96h15J47c3k>



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<https://youtu.be/Y8yEH8TZUsk>

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## Arts calendars

- [Publishers, journals and prizes](#) (S J Williams)
- [Poetry competitions, submissions and opportunities](#) (Angela Carr)

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